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# History of the Graduate Theology Program, St. Mary's University, 1959-1994

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**HISTORY OF THE GRADUATE THEOLOGY PROGRAM  
ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY  
1959-1994**



Rev. John G. Leies, S.M.  
August 1994

### THE START

In March, 1993, Father Charles Miller, S.M., the Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, asked me to write a history of the Graduate Theology Program. That history would cover the years 1959 to the present (1993).

To a limited degree, I had been acquainted with the program. For fifteen summers, I had taught the Introductory course in Sacred Scripture. On numerous occasions, students taking their comprehensive examinations, were directed by me. And for a decade, I had been Chairperson of the Department of Theology.

The practicality of the proposal was evident. We all need details of the past. We all need the history of past efforts and achievements. All this history should not be lost. If now we can preserve the even minute details of this past, then let us list the courses, mark the evolution of the programs and put down in sharp focus, what sincere professors and ardent students worked to bring to fruition.

### THE SEARCH

Material for this history was not found all in one place. There were records in the Registrar's Office, in that office's "morgue", as well as class lists, grade sheets, bulletins and brochures. Professors were prompted to recall specific courses; student reactions were typed out; letters sent to dozens of persons. At times; some records were unavailable. One Graduate Theology brochure had all the details of the year except the date.

As soon as some details were located, they were relayed to professors and others for verification. Thus in the Appendices to this history, (with lists of courses, specific details about professors, dates of workshops etc.), you will be looking at items of interest culled from both written answers and personally-related memories.

Questionnaires were mailed to some eighty students, professors, alumni, and 45 were returned. Every effort was made to have accuracy reign. Very often the printed word was backing up statements made by those who were questioned. This writer feels that we have here a valid instrument detailing what has happened in the Department these past three decades.

### PURPOSES OF THE DEPARTMENT

Before detailing the beginnings of the Graduate Theology Program, there should be some declaration of the purposes of such a department. When the Graduate School was established at St. Mary's in 1936, Bulletin No. 12, stated: "The purpose of the Graduate School is to leave upon its students a definite impress of sound scholarship joined to a pleasing personality and high moral character, both resilient and resolute."

In 1974, Father David Fleming, S.M., then adviser to the Department of Theology, wrote: "The principal aim of graduate study is the development of the power of independent thought and the ability to carry on research in some area of scholarship."

As to the work of Theology, Father Fleming said: "the avowed purpose of Graduate Theology is to develop the habit of theology in the minds of present and future teachers of Sacred Doctrine". And he added: "The study of Theology should be an experience of integration."

Eight years later, the Newsletter of the Graduate Theology department explained: "The primary concerns of the Marianists are... formation of individuals in faith and love (hence being more than instructors passing on information) and formation of faith communities such as those indicated in the New Testament, in a Marian context... The department of Graduate Theology participates in this evangelical mission in a specific way; students are encouraged in a faith context to develop a contemporary foundation in advanced critical theological study and reflection for their particular church ministries." (Newsletter, Nov. 1982, Vol.2, No.1)

### TAPESTRY OR CRAZY-QUILT?

We have all admired a beautiful tapestry or Oriental carpet. We may have also admired a crazy-quilt of intricate design and evident seams. Our history, gathered piecemeal and over several months may resemble a crazy-quilt rather than a precious tapestry. The seams are evident. The materials vary, and, at times, may seem to clash.

Thus if you find parts disparate and even disjointed, you see really a reflection of what the history of our Graduate Theology is. We see bits of information, tiny bites of evaluations, large pieces of reliable data from official documents, as well as rambling correspondence between administrators and chair-persons. It is hard to come out with a smooth stream of events over the rugged history of more than thirty years. And if we had an appealing tapestry instead of this crazy-quilt, we would miss the very human facts, responses and variety that have taken place. Crazy-quilts are loved, admired and readily treasured.

This history would be much simpler if the Department had always had the same name; had always been "Theology", and not successively "Religion", "Sacred Theology", "Sacred Doctrine", and then "Theology". Additionally, if the courses would always be listed as "TH", and not as the years go by, "SD", and then some of them "RE", "PD", (Sacred Doctrine, Religious Education, Pastoral Administration). Another complication is that, at one time, courses were listed with three digits, and later, with four.

One of the reasons for the change in name of the Department was that when St. Mary's theology professors joined the national society, that society was called "College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine". So, the Department became "Sacred Doctrine Department" instead of "Religion Department". But in the space of several years, the national society changed its name to "College Theology Society". Thus the Department then became "Theology Department", with sometimes the added adjective of "Sacred", as in "Department of Sacred Theology".

### A FALSE START

In 1959, St. Mary's University initiated again its Graduate Program for the entire university. Father Ralph Dyer, S.M., a professor of Religion for under-graduates, thought about, dreamed about, and spoke about "Why not inaugurate a Graduate THEOLOGY Program? Other universities have done so!"

On several occasions, while I was at the University doing some work in English Literature, Father Dyer spoke about his plans. I definitely encouraged him to do what he possibly could to start such a program. He did set up a preliminary schedule of courses, invited two priests from up north to come down here in June, to teach a course in Graduate Theology. The priests were Father J. Willis Langlinais, S.M., and Father Charles Neumann, S.M. Father Dyer planned on being the third professor.

Brochures were written up, printed, and stacked according to postal areas. They were addressed to priests, Brothers, Sisters and religious education offices, and Father Dyer had spoken to some of these about his plans. They were very enthusiastic about the prospect of starting a serious study of Theology.

During the late weeks of spring, 1959, Father Dyer waited and waited for some kind of response, or, at least some soft inquiry about the courses for the summer. Nary a note. Nary an enquiry. Nary a phone call. Father then contacted some of those who had been so interested, and not one of them had received anything from the University. Very close to the registration date, Father Dyer went to the Mail Room, to discover that not a single one of the brochures had been sent out. All were neatly stacked, waiting and waiting to be sent out. But it was definitely too late. The summer 1959 Graduate Theology Program was an impossibility. It was doomed, so it seemed.

So, back to the drawing boards. Undaunted, but understandably emotionally swamped, Father Dyer set out to plan for the summer of 1960. Professors were contacted. Course titles and content were chosen. Lodging arrangements were made at local convents, parishes, homes. Twenty-seven students enrolled, among them three Marianists. The three professors were: Father John Gorman, Father George Montague and Father John A. Leies.

Sisters of the Holy Ghost, from the east end of town, came on a bus each school day, to follow the courses. They were determined to enrich themselves in Theology. One of the first enrollees completed her work for Masters of Arts in Theology in the winter of 1964, and was graduated at May ceremonies in 1965, the first of a long line of "M.A.'s in Theology" reaching right up to the present.

A few words of appraisal may be in order here. Some years later, Father David Fleming, S.M. in assuming the post of Graduate Adviser of the Program, wrote:

**"The Graduate Theology Program is one, possibly, of our more important ministries." This is a very proper and forceful statement. In the 1980's, one of the professors noted; "St. Mary's was way ahead of Catholic colleges and universities, most of whom did not initiate Graduate Theology programs until after Vatican II. St. Mary's success had a lot to do with the fact that it was ready ahead of time." Father Dyer deserves a great deal of credit for his determination to launch and bring to success a program of Graduate Theology.**

### GRADUATE SCHOOL BEGINNINGS

The Graduate School of St. Mary's University was established officially by the Executive Board of the University already on December 30, 1936 (see Bulletin, New Series, Vol. XII, November 1938).

"It aims to leave upon the students a definite impress of sound scholarship joined to a pleasant personality and high moral character, both resilient and resolute."

The Graduate School was temporarily discontinued after World War II, in order to give returning veterans of the war a chance to receive adequate instruction, and to avoid having many of the professors tied up in graduate studies' teaching, and with not sufficient time to devote to the eager returnees from war.

The present program of graduate studies was approved of by the Executive Board of the University of February 2, 1959 - and by the Board of Trustees on February 6, 1959. The program would lead to a Master's Degree in: Business Administration, Economics, History, Mathematics, Physics and Theology.

On the Graduate Council were the following: Dr. Ludwig Mai, Rev. Walter Buehler, Rev. James Young, Brother Paul Goelz, Brother James Gray, Brother Henry Ringkamp, Brother Joseph Rudolph, Brother Joseph Schmitz and Reverend Ralph Dyer.

### SACRED THEOLOGY

The catalogue listed "Sacred Theology" with the title of "Graduate Adviser" given to Rev. Ralph Dyer, S.M., and then stated that "the purpose of the department is to develop the habit of theology in the minds of present and future teachers of sacred doctrine. Graduate students will be expected to do all their work in the department of theology. Therefore, no undergraduate courses may be used for graduate credit."

Students could choose one of the two following plans:

Plan A. If they have a knowledge of Latin, they may take 24 hours of graduate courses, and in addition TH 638 and TH 639, :

TH 638 Introduction to Research in Theology

TH 639 Thesis Direction

Plan B. If they do not have a reading knowledge of Latin, they must take 30 hours of graduate courses and write a scholarly essay.

### Graduate Courses

Here is the list of Graduate Theology courses at that time.

TH 621: Introduction to Sacred Theology, 2 sem. hrs.

TH 622: Introduction to Sacred Scripture, 2 sem. hrs.



TH 623: Introduction to Moral Theology, 2 sem. hrs.  
(obligatory for all)

The following graduate courses were required:

TH 624 God and His Attributes  
TH 625 Sanctifying Grace  
TH 626 The Trinity and Creation  
TH 627 Theological Virtues  
TH 628 Incarnation and Redemption  
TH 629 The Sacraments

Electives:

TH 721 Apologetics	TH 726: Mariology
TH 722 Ascetical Theology	TH 727: Mystical Body and Ecclesiology
TH 723 Church History I	TH 728: Moral Virtues
TH 724 Church History II	TH 729: Liturgy
TH 725 The Mass	

### DEPARTMENT DESIGNATIONS

At the start, the Graduate Theology Program was part of the Department of Religion (later, "Sacred Doctrine" and later still, "Theology"). It was only in 1980 (letter of Father Langlinais September 29, 1980 to Lee Brown, Dean) that official notice was given that there was now a new Department of Graduate Theology, with Father John A. Leies, the new chairman, and Father Charles Miller, the Graduate Adviser.

In August, when Father John A. Leies was appointed Academic Vice-President, Father Joseph A. Tarrillion was appointed Chairman.

Thus, there were two departments, but one theological faculty (some professors taught both undergraduate and graduate students).

### FOCUS OF THE PROGRAM

Five years later, Father Tarrillion (on March 28, 1985) proposed that the program of Graduate Theology be revised, mainly to prepare lay leaders and deacons, and also give direction to institutional management, leadership dynamism and self-awareness. We note with interest that at the very beginning the stated thrust of the program was "to develop the habit of theology in the minds of present and future teachers of sacred doctrine."

Father Langlinais wrote at this time, 1980, to Father John A. Leies, that he should draw up a job description of responsibilities attached to the new chairmanship and new adviser.

So we see new designations: Department of Sacred Doctrine, Department of Sacred Theology, and now, two departments: Department of Theology and Department of Graduate Theology. And two different foci: teachers or lay leaders and deacons.

### STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT

We have just seen how the Graduate Theology Program began. In looking over the genesis and development of the program it would be good now to study the strong points as well as the weaknesses of the program over the years.

In order to have a viable program, certain strong qualities are needed. Certain weaknesses must be addressed in order to assure success and permanence.

In brief, here are the strong points:

1. changes were made at the right time and in the right way.
2. there must be an impact on the students especially on those who are to be religious educators.

3. the summer program implies an intensive and deep experience of both learning and of community spirit.
4. the faculty must be strong, individually and corporately.
5. a synthesizing through Comprehensive Examinations is needed to assure lasting results.
6. dissertations and scholarly essays offer a litmus test of the efficacy of the program.
7. uniformity of action and planning is enhanced by a Handbook for Students and directives given to the professors.

### STRENGTHS OF THE DEPARTMENT

In order to have a viable and dynamic Graduate Theology Program, certain strong qualities must be present. We will examine in some detail what we perceive as the specific strengths of our program.

#### A. Changes at the Right Time and in the Right Way.

In a vibrant and dynamic program, the personnel involved must be alert to changes in the religious and civic worlds. A definite need exists to make changes in the right way and at the right time.

The Theology offerings at first had strong Thomistic bases. The Summa Theologiae was followed quite strictly in content and topics treated. Courses on the Trinity, on Revelation, on Morality marked the central offerings. However, echoes of what was going on at the Second Vatican Council, at time through various "leaks" and "scoops" of the media, told theology professors about the fresh air promised by Pope John XXIII and some of the Council Fathers.

Our professors adapted some courses to the new orientations evidenced at the Council and during the conciliar debates. These debates were frequently led by theologians and biblical scholars of giant stature: de Lubac, Murray, Suenens, Bea, Ahern, Dieckmann et al. A more healthy theology began to emerge from documents of the Council, soon to be high-lighted in our Theology courses. One such example was in the Theology 722 course "On the Church", taught already in the year 1970.

One of the students in the program from the very start, remarked that in the first years, professors seemed to base much of the course on seminary notes. Truly, adequate texts were not available. Soon, however, the Council documents amplified what alert professors had already included in their up-dated notes, accompanied by fresh approaches to theological thought.

Some courses remained solidly rooted in the Fathers of the Church and the preceding Councils. It is interesting to note that in 1970, Theology 624, previously labelled simply as "The Trinity" now appeared in the catalogue as:

The Trinity: Biblical knowledge of the Trinity.  
 Patristic development. Eastern and Western Thomistic development.  
 Theological controversies. Trinity of persons, unity of nature.  
 Relations. Indwelling of Trinity in community and individuals.  
 Trinity as central mystery of Christian life.

The criticism voiced previously ("some professors simply used their seminary notes") was possibly valid in some cases.

In the Scripture courses, a great dose of caution was shared by the professors. The text of Father Levie, for example, used as background for the introduction to Scripture course, was entitled "The Word of God in the Words of Men," and seemed to some as very daring and very advanced. Yet it was already in 1964 that the Biblical Commission put out its "Instruction on the Historicity of the Gospels", later reflected in "Dei Verbum", that still causes hesitation on the part of some professors and students to interpret fully the latitude of the "Instruction", and backing off from some of the notes found in the 1970 and 1990 editions of the "Jerome Biblical Commentary".

A healthy desire to up-date was coupled to a healthy note of prudence in many of the courses.

The movement from the Thomistic atmosphere to a wider expanse of doctrine was noted by Father David Fleming when he wrote to me in 1993: "From out of a bit-too-classical and Thomistic treatment, came courses in historical theology, spirituality, world religions and the theology of ministry."

At the time, quite severe caution reigned. Archbishop Lucey admonished us at the time of our First Scripture Institute that we carefully screen all speakers. At a later Institute, an Episcopal priest had the caution-inspiring name of Reverend John Knox. At that time, too, we were told that no priest was to appear on a panel with a Protestant minister unless he were well-versed in Scripture and Dogma.

#### 1965 - 1970: HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT.

Healthy developments took place in the theological presentations. Our program advanced in the healthier and vivifying stream of inquiry into the Word and the Revelation of a loving Father.

During the first decade of changes at the Council, St. Mary's was fortunate in having among its priestly students, Monsignor Bernard Popp, later Bishop Popp, auxiliary in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Monsignor's enthusiasm assured St. Mary's that it was doing the right thing, and clergy and laity in the archdiocese felt that the theological presentations were healthy, orthodox, and part of the fresh air that John XXIII had hoped to bring into the Church.

Another change brought improvement. In the years of 1974 and 1975, courses were set up in four areas of concentration:

#### 1. Scripture

2. Systematic Theology

3. Catechesis

4. Spirituality

(cf. Newsletter, Spring 1983 and Fall 1982, Vol. 2 #1)

to which was added, shortly thereafter: a fifth area:

5. Religious Education

The catalogue of 1991-1992 replaces "Spirituality" with "Moral Theology"

The main areas of concentration upon which the comprehensive examinations would center were set forth clearly in the 1983 Newsletter (Vol. 2, #2):--

1. Scripture: Hermeneutics:  
Theologies of the Old Testament  
The Spirit's wisdom in the Old Testament  
Luke, and the other Gospels
2. Systematic Theology: Bio-Ethics  
Sacraments  
Theological Method  
Catholic Morality in Today's World
3. Christian Spirituality: Prayer  
Mysticism  
Discipleship
4. Religious Education: Patterns for Faith Growth

Later the area of Pastoral Administration completed the list. Greater stability in what seemed a fast evolution of programs came with the publication of the Five Year Schedule of Graduate Theology courses (Cf. Appendix 7 April 1989).

(from the Newsletter of November 1981, Vol. I No. 1)

The Goals of the New Chairman of the Graduate Theology Program:

1. an effective and academically excellent M.A. Program  
Objectives: foundation on Scripture, Systematics, Spirituality,  
Catechesis integration of theological study with roles  
of Christian ministry  
program of continuing studies  
a supportive education and faith community for  
students and professors  
adequate library resources  
special programs
2. build images of program as service  
Objectives: publicity and recruitment program  
inner communication

Programs: Permanent Deacons' Program; Institute for Contemporary Christian Insight (under Father Sargent); Corpus Christi Program (under Ann Schwendinger); six lectures for the Victoria area (under Father Miller and Father Sargent); DRE workshop (under Father Tarrillion) and Catholic Charismatic Bible Institute

From the very beginning, students had two options in the Program:

The Thesis route: a thesis and 24 semester hours of courses;

The Non-Thesis route, with a scholarly essay and 36 semester hours of courses. (Cf. Appendix 5 for some titles of theses, dissertations and scholarly essays.)

In brief, a healthy openness, then, to the new vigor of the Church after the Second Vatican Council continued to mark the years as the turbulent 60's gave way to the wide-eyed 70's and the more sedate 80's and 90's.

This, then, explains how the Program was changed, most often at the right time and in the right way. We now move to the second strength of the Program: the impact on students.



## **B. IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUS**

Graduate Theology students, especially Sisters, Brothers and Priests, profited greatly from the various courses, particularly by keeping abreast of the decrees of the Second Vatican Council and accepting the changes introduced. Catholics were definitely living in a changing Church.

While neighboring institutions emphasized the pastoral aspect of theological studies, St. Mary's put the emphasis on content, on theological method, on interpretation of Scripture and the Conciliar statements. Our professors insisted on solid theological content, on precise delineation of what exactly the various texts meant, and on the wider horizons of Church teaching.

The "open window" of Pope John XXIII meant not only that pastoral approaches should be made, but also that the new insights, opened up by study, be welcomed. This approach guarded against innovation for innovation's sake, realizing that only precise knowledge can explain God's truth adequately.

Individual religious, after graduation, gave witness to the theological formation they received. One Sister, at the General Chapter of her congregation, so impressed the capitulants with her richer appreciation of the Church's teachings that they elected her to the international council of the congregation. Another, in a few years after receiving her M.A. in Theology, was elected Superior-General. Other nuns, too, over the decades after graduation, wielded a beautiful influence on the spirituality of their congregation. The first Marianist Brother to enter the Program served as one of the Provincial Superiors of the St. Louis Province of the Marianists. The professor who directed the workshop on "Spiritual Direction" is now the Superior-General of all the Marianists. Several dioceses attest to the influence of priests who graduate from our Program.

Another advance and advantage to the student marked the fall of 1970, when Graduate Theology joined an inter-institutional agreement with Oblate College of the Southwest (now, "Oblate College of Theology") so that courses at Oblate were to be credited to St. Mary's.

Again, another enrichment to the student came from the fact that the professors in the Graduate Theology Department met several times a year for more than a decade with the professors of Trinity University's Religion Department, giving papers and listening to the learned presentations of outstanding professors such as John H. Hayes, William O. Walker, Guy Ranson, Francisco Garcia-Treto, Ronnie Kliever.

The greatest impact on students however came from the solid core of professors who continued year after year, summer after summer, as key professionals in the Program. Again and again over the years, we see the names of Father George

Montague, Father J. Willis Langlinais, Father Charles Neumann, Father John A. Leies, and later Father Joseph Tarrillion, all of them Marianists. They gave consistency, solidity, a solid base of orthodoxy. They helped maintain a true direction and a vigilant guardianship to the "depositum fidei".

One of the Marianist Brothers who said that he profited greatly from our program wrote: "Overall, it is the professors and the support staff which make the Graduate Program a resounding success."

The impact on students was a definite strength of the Program, and complemented the changes which were made at the right time and in the right way.

### C. INTENSITY OF THE SUMMER SESSIONS:

Students attending the six-week summer sessions (in the first years, summer classes were the only ones; spring and fall offerings came later, in 1964, with only one or two courses offered at those times) found that the pace of lectures, seminars, liturgies, necessary leisure and relaxation: all added up to a full busy session. The six weeks were appreciated, loved, looked forward to, at the same time that everyone agreed that these weeks were far from being a vacation. We all know that often true relaxation can come from busy days with purpose than from random hours spent in idleness.

Coming after a hectic school year, the summer sessions presented new motivation, and a sense of accomplishment that was very rewarding. Chance encounters with other teachers, table talk, and letters to friends were often filled with evidences of broadened theological perceptions and views.

Week-end visits to Lake Medina or to the Montague Ranch in Bandera, as well as Talent Shows and similar activities added the spice of variety to busy weeks of study. One summer session was marked by a Talent Show that surprised and delighted everyone. Sister Petronia led the cast in a musical and the rendition of "Hello, Dolly!". The applause after her presentation was well-deserved, for her role in the musical was a far cry from her work during the year, when she taught the Bible to prison inmates in Pennsylvania. In fact, one of her students was the well-known Jimmy Hoffa!

### Liturgies

The Eucharistic liturgies as well as the para-liturgical celebrations gave other well-spent intervals away from intense study and intense listening in class.

One student wrote (in 1993) "The liturgies were excellent!!!" (ed. yes, three exclamation points). "The homilies were very inspiring and on target with the

Scripture readings of the day. The music was excellent, the community spirit which was generated and nourished was plus for the Summer Program." This from a religious Brother whose influence right now in his home diocese also deserves triple exclamation points.

Other students gained great support in the fact that they rubbed elbows every day with persons of like mind and spirit. The sight, too, of older religious trying to up-date their theology boosted morale. The presence among so many religious persons eager to learn about God's Word, explained in classroom and chapel, was a harbinger of what would take place in the 1990's: lay people immersed in their ministries in the parishes of our country.

Thus the five summers spent in reaching the M.A. in Theology were a preface of success in the ministry students prepared for.

#### D. AN ENDURING AND CONSISTENT FACULTY

We have already mentioned the core of Marianist professors who carried the program on their shoulders (Montague, Neumann, Leies, Miller, Tarrillion). The one thing which characterized the early years of the program was the consistency of doctrine and the unity of interpretations that spells out "stability." The stabilizing influence of our professors kept many calm and unified during the 1960's and 1970's when so many changes resulted elsewhere in chaos and turmoil.

One of the professors who taught just a few years ago wrote: "We had a strong faculty, a mixture of the regular St. Mary's professors, with other Marianists and visiting professors coming to help in the summers." A Marianist Brother, then in his sixties, said: "I found all my courses very helpful and exciting, particularly as they clarified the puzzling bomb-shell of Vatican II."

Outside professors and lecturers added zest to the academics: Dianne Bergant, Celia Deutsch, Leo Walsh, and among guest lecturers, Raymond Brown, Rene Laurentin, Virgil Elizondo et al. One Marianist Brother confided: "I still remember Raymond Brown", and that after 28 years!

Consistent, measured and orthodox teaching helped the students who had to prepare for their Comprehensive Examinations. They were more at ease at the time of the exams because they felt that they had received exact and well-prepared instruction. (Cf. Appendix 1 for a list of faculty members over the years.)

### E. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATIONS

In addition to the strength of a consistent faculty, another strength of the Program was the introduction of Comprehensive Examinations.

Several years after the start of the Graduate Theology Program, the faculty decided that all students aspiring to the M.A. in Theology would undergo Comprehensive Examinations in their specializations, and to a lesser degree, in their other courses. The faculty was convinced that this was a good move, definitely desirable. But also potentially frightening for some students.

A series of definite questions and/or topics was given to all the candidates. These questions and topics were revised as the courses were revised. Each student, however, had to prepare only those questions which had been treated in his/her specific courses. (Cf. Appendices 3,4,6)

At the start, the procedure of "comps" as they were called, was awesome and too rigid. The candidate faced nervously three or more professors, mostly in clerical garb, as question after question was fired away. It was an ordeal for many, and an "initiation" rather than an examination.

One student, a nun, simply froze and could not phrase an answer. She was gently told that she should come back after a week, and try again. She did so, and passed. Another failed the exam because she refused to state or refer to anything that had come up at the Vatican Council. The professors felt that she would not, in her ministry, be able to properly instruct others to live and work in the post-conciliar Church.

It was soon apparent, though, that the three-professor-team exam, oral, was too threatening to some. That procedure did not permit the professor to really "dialogue" with the candidate. Added to that, it happened on several occasions that while a visibly nervous candidate was undergoing the "ordeal", that outside the classroom were several well-meaning friends, reciting the rosary during the minutes and minutes of query and explanation. The examinees must have felt that they were going into an intensive care unit, and that the exam was a definite emergency.

A change was made. Individual students took their orals with each professor individually. This made for a more relaxed atmosphere. I sometimes felt that we covered more material because the give-and-take was more fluent.

As the years went on, new guide-lines were drawn up for the comprehensives. New topics were given for each of the areas of specialization. From these topics, precise questions were formulated. The new guide-lines were printed, and were used. In 1981 a folder of 19 pages gave all the questions and topics. (Cf.

Appendix 3) And in June 1986, a new set of questions and topics were published, this time a folder of 29 pages. (Cf. Appendix 4) In 1991 a new list was distributed. (Appendix 6)

Comprehensive examinations and precise topics and questions were definitely a great strength to the Program.

#### **F. DISSERTATIONS AND SCHOLARLY ESSAYS**

Allied to the Comprehensive Examinations as another factor of strength was the requirement to write a Dissertation or a Scholarly Essay on some theological topic.

This requirement was there from the start of the Program. It demanded precision, scholarship, discipline and mirrored the statement in the 1939 publication of the purposes of the Graduate School at St. Mary's.

If one wishes to fully appreciate the dissertation, and to a lesser degree, the scholarly essay, and the enrichment it gave to the student, one can read the titles of dissertations and essays in Appendix 5. This will tell a person more about the dissertation and essay than any explanation given here.

#### **G. ADAPTATION OF COURSES AND NEW COURSES**

Stagnation is seldom a strength. In order to keep apace of the dynamism in the post-Vatican Church, the faculty and the department as a whole felt that courses were to be adapted, and new ones introduced to reflect the changes which were up-dating and renewing the Church. This echoed the call of the Council and of Pope John XXIII: "Ecclesia semper reformanda et renovanda."

Teachers in Religion courses, particularly in parochial schools and in Catholic High Schools, wanted more information on how to live the faith. A new word had come into common usage, "Discipleship."

Some teachers, unfortunately, moved too quickly, at times. Innovations became needs. Imprudent changes were made. Errors of judgment marked some decisions and some programs. At times, these errors of judgment were defined as though they were part of the magisterium.

Therefore, some teachers clamored for help, help in how to present to critical students, the answers that would fulfill their needs in the revitalized Church.

As one of the graduates of our Program wrote: "I was teaching juniors and seniors and they were nailing my hide to the wall with the hippie-generation anti-authority stance as they challenged the moral doctrines of the Church."

The Program wanted to assist these teachers and others, and so courses in "Discipleship" were expanded. Advanced ideas on Catechesis were explained. There was a move to give institutes and workshops to permanent deacons, who all too often, had to serve as teachers in "religion classes."

And finally, the adding of Religious Education courses, and also the courses in the distinct area of Spirituality, marked the recognition of the need for more precise knowledge and new orientations.

In addition, a consistent and growing emphasis on the Bible, especially as a source of our theological knowledge, gave to many correct and challenging teachings on the moral life.

One graduate (1971-1974) said that the courses on Paul and John propelled him into more study of the Bible and he found there the answers he needed in teaching a Religion course in High School, and in his work in the parishes. "I believe that St. Mary's courses on the Bible are comparable to any such course in the more prestigious universities" was his concluding statement.

It is in the area of Catechesis that we see very clearly how adaptation helped so many. In 1968, Father Schmedinghof, S.M. outlined a catechetical program to be launched in the summer of 1969. This would lead to a Master of Arts in Religious Education degree.

Launching the program proved inadvisable, despite a willingness on the part of the Graduate Council, because Father Schmedinghof became unavailable for the initial stage of the implementation. At that time, Father Montague wrote to the Theology faculty: "I contacted Sister Marion Francis Margo, C.D.P., to help plan and launch the program for the summer of 1970.

In the summer sessions of 1970, these courses were offered:

RE 621 Communicating the Life-Process of Faith; Sr. Marion F. Margo  
RE 626 Communicating Arts in Teaching Religion; Father Louis Reile

The Religious Education program would be a specialization of the Theology Department. However, when the M.A. in Religious Education was opened up for students in the Program, it was made clear that a student could not get an M.A. in both Theology and an M.A. in Religious Education.

Course offerings in the July 14, 1969 revision of the program were:

Communicating the Life-Process of Faith  
Catechetical Process

Seminar in Catechetics for High School Teachers  
Seminar in Catechetics for Grade School Teachers  
Religious Education for Adults.

In 1980, the Program in Religious Education stated that its purpose was "to prepare the student for ministry of the Word, whether in religious instruction or in the pastoral realm....It shares with the Department of Theology a concern for the inter-relations of Theology and Christian Discipleship. It also shares with the Graduate Program in Education, Guidance and Counseling and Psychology a concern for preparing the student for professional work in full awareness of the problems and potential of human growth and development."

The courses outlined in 1980 were:

Introduction to Catechetics  
Religious Education Learning Theory  
Program Planning

with the directive to take Education and Psychology courses in Mental Health and Social Behavior. (Cf. Graduate Program in Religious Education, Appendix 10)

The Second Annual Workshop for Directors of Religious Education, June 10-13, 1982 was co-sponsored by the Graduate Theology Department and the National Association of Parish Co-ordinators of Religious Education.

The National Catholic Education Association at the same time presented talks on campus on these topics: Power and Ministry of the Director of Religious Education, the DRE as Enabler of Ministries, the Catholic Laity as Frozen Assets of the Church, and Doctrine from Language to Commitment.

Adaptation.... new courses...another kind of M.A....all these point to a change of presentation and emphasis, to meet the needs of Today's Church. This indicates a strength, and additional strength of our Theology Program.

#### H. STUDENT HANDBOOKS AND MANUAL

Lending precision to our program was the publication of Student Handbooks. The first edition of "Student Handbook: Policies and Guidelines for the Graduate Theology Student" saw the light of day in March, 1981. This first edition was followed by others: 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987.

The Handbook spelled out Registration Procedures (I.D. card, health card, library privileges), the Grading System, Specialization, Candidacy, Research Papers, Comprehensives, Theses, Religious Education Projects, etc.

In the 1982 edition of the Handbook, Father Joseph Tarrillion gave the outline of the Goals and Objectives of the Graduate Theology Program, with a five-year plan of courses to be offered. This plan or projection was clear, very clear, and



the two-page chart of courses spelled out for those entering the Program some very precise directives. (Cf. Appendix 17)

The 1984 edition included a Balance Sheet that enabled each student to plan ahead. Also included was a set of Guide-lines and a bibliography for those taking the Comprehensive examinations.

A rough draft (in 1983) promised a "Manual for Formulating and the Research of Theses and Scholarly Papers," and promised to give each student very definite help and aid.

On a preceding page, we had lined up the various "strengths" of our Program. Let us now briefly summarize the various strong points:

1. changes were made at the right time and in the right way
2. there was a definite impact on the students
3. the summer program was intensive and a deep experience
4. the faculty was consistent, dedicated and capable.
5. comprehensive examinations gave lasting results
6. dissertations and scholarly essays aided greatly
7. a Student Handbook and other aids strengthened both the program and the students.

Knowing this background and these strengths, we can now look at the possible "weaknesses" of the program.

It is all too easy to describe good qualities and strengths to a person or a program and see all things in a positive light. This is often evidenced in the pages of the year-books of both high schools and colleges where all seems so easy and every year was bright and successful.

But let us dive right into the listing of some possible weaknesses or deficiencies of our Graduate Theology Program.

### WEAKNESSES IN THE PROGRAM

In the opinion of some graduates, the Graduate Theology Program was not without its shortcomings. "Weaknesses" one called them, or "areas of where some improvements could have and should have been made earlier or more effectively."

We list these areas before we treat each one individually.

- A. more courses in Spirituality were needed.
- B. Moral Theology should have been more emphasized.
- C. There are so few graduate theology students today compared with past years.
- D. The summer program especially was too hectic and crowded.
- E. there was too much emphasis on academics and not enough importance given to the pastoral aspect.
- F. The Academic Library had too few books on theology.
- G. Many of the professors attended the same university, and thus there was the danger of academic "inbreeding."

These "weaknesses" will now be addressed individually.

### A. MORE COURSES IN SPIRITUALITY

One respondent to our questionnaires thought that more attention should have been placed on Spirituality and allied subjects. This complaint came from a lay person, a professional in the medical field who had also been active in parish work and in world affairs. She did add, that perhaps not many students were interested enough in thinking to ask for more spirituality courses. But another student voiced the same admonition with "let's have more spirituality presentations."

It must be admitted, though, that the additions and suppression of courses are extremely difficult. Other institutions run into the same problem. In his report on the National Meeting of Graduate Advisers of Religious Education (1972) Father George Montague wrote: "As regards courses to add or to drop, the problems we face are found elsewhere. No two programs are alike."

Interestingly, the specialization of "Spirituality" in the Program has now been replaced (1992) by Moral Theology!

And so we easily slide right into the next note of criticism.

### B. WHY NOT MORE EMPHASIS ON MORAL THEOLOGY?

In voicing ideas on how our program could improve, one graduate insisted that more attention should have been paid to Moral Theology, and with that, a greater stress on Church authority, as a safe-guard for morality. In the Self-Study of 1983 there is the simple statement: "there was a lack of faculty with special expertise in Moral Theology."

The lack of courses in Moral Theology especially in critical areas, was partially remedied when a course in Bio-Ethics was given, June 20 - July 29, 1983 by Professor Joseph Boyle, Ph.D. Georgetown, and co-author with Germaine Grisez of books on Ethics. He addressed the issues of bio-ethics from the perspectives of Vatican II and contemporary moral theology, treating such issues as patient autonomy, the value of life, the right to health care and the moral dilemma in contemporary health care. Recent moves to more courses on all aspects of morality as well as the work of institutes and offerings of courses on morals easily show that this area has improved in late years.

C. WHY NOT MORE STUDENTS AS IN YESTER-YEARS? Many persons here on campus and elsewhere, when we speak about our Graduate Theology Program, remark almost immediately that our numbers have definitely decreased in recent years. In the early years, enrollment totalled 120, 130, 140 graduate students in Theology. This has not been repeated in the 1980's and today.

Professors and students have mentioned several factors which explain the decrease in numbers. First, at the start, Graduate Theology courses were held only in the summer. Later, when fall and spring courses were added, some students who would have been here five summers, finished in two or three years. So, enrollment naturally dropped.

Others think that the drop in religious vocations meant that fewer Sisters and Brothers (and seminarians) were around, and so enrollment dropped. Others claim that lay persons and permanent deacons could have filled the gap.

In addition to these reasons for the drop in numbers is the fact that few lay persons can make a living, comfortably, working for the Church, and so do not enroll in courses where the tuition is high. So Theology courses are out of the question. Scholarships and reduced tuition do not sufficiently solve the problem.

In the early 1970's, tuition was \$35 to \$51 per semester hour. In 1990, it was \$225. Lay persons contemplating a Theology degree faced a high outlay.

One of our former professors believes that the fall in enrollment was due to the lack of clear and imaginative vision of the needs of the Church today. He thought that there needed to be aggressive moves to up-date our Graduate Theology Program, and that this would bring in more enrollees. He claims that nearby institutions with theology programs did not suffer a drop-off as did St. Mary's. There is no data to substantiate or disclaim this assertion. The real situation is that Oblate Theology School is essentially a seminarian operation, and that Incarnate Word has mainly undergraduates in its program.

#### D. OUR SUMMER COURSES WERE TOO HECTIC

Several graduates of our Program pointed out that the summers were too crowded and hectic. Some professors assigned five or six term papers. Some students were carrying a full load, and also attempting to prepare for the comprehensive examinations the same summer. Other students had administrative obligations elsewhere, and did not escape the frantic phone calls and demanding letters that pursued them to the very halls of Academe.

There were welcome "Breaks". These breaks gave a breathing space in their lives. One summer, twenty-four Sisters spent an evening on the River, having a dinner on one of the river barges plying the San Antonio River along the famed Riverwalk. At another time, ten students, on a week-end, drove to Houston, visited NASA, and capped off the day with a visit to the Astrodome, to enjoy a ball-game, in which seven homeruns kept everyone on their feet. Talent shows marked some of the summers. And Brother Ken Jung, cook at our scholasticate, prepared a Mid-East dinner for those who would be making the Study Tour of

Israel the next summer; his feast included a serving of felafel, pita bread, hummus, goat cheese and other Israeli specialties.

People survived the summers. All will admit, though, that it was not an easy task. But the intellectual stimulus plus the experience of community made things definitely more bearable.

#### **E. THE PROGRAM WAS TOO ACADEMIC**

Some claim that our program put too much emphasis on the academic and not enough on the pastoral aspects of ministry and teaching. One priest, who was also a Religion teacher, and who is working at present in a parish, wrote: "If there was a weakness at the time, it was on the side of being too academic. We had lots of books to read, and papers to write. I learned a lot, and the material was heady, but not too applicable to my life at the time."

The duel between the academically-inclined faculty and students, and the pastorally-inclined persons will go on indefinitely. With the addition of the Pastoral Administration courses, there will be greater balance, and the chance for every student to direct himself or herself in the area where there is more opportunity to develop according to everyone's own personality and qualities.

#### **F. NOT SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF THEOLOGY BOOKS IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY**

A surfacing complaint from time to time was this: "there are not enough books in the academic library on Theology for the number of persons enrolled in the Theology classes." Some professors did not have a specific text-book, and so students had to draw on the library resources. These professors distributed a rich bibliography. However, multiple copies of the books were not available. One graduate student in our program stated quite bluntly: "The library facilities were very poor. I used the library at Trinity University."

In the Self-Study (1973?) it was noted that the weak areas were in Moral Theology and Catechetics.

The Department library (distinct from the Academic Library) had 2,000 books. But few students even knew about its location and resources. Some audiovisual resources were readily available to professors and students.

In the fall of 1982, Father Charles Neumann published a "Guide to Reference Sources in Theology".

In 1960 when I first came to St. Mary's as Theology instructor, there were very few books on Theology in the academic library. Acquisitions were made, but

mainly in the line of biblical studies and ecumenical affairs. If other professors noted a lack of books, at the time it was extremely easy to have books purchased.

At the present time, library acquisitions have kept apace.

#### G. CORE PROFESSORS' BACKGROUND: TOO MUCH THE SAME

One very sensitive area of criticism from former students centers around what some called a "weakness", but which was also at the same time, a "strength". This was the very similar seminary training and theological background of the strong "core" professors. During almost twenty years, these professors carried the main load of teaching. Practically, all were Marianists, and had received their training under the Dominicans at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Some thought that there was here a danger of theological "inbreeding". Some wished for more differences in opinion and outlook.

However, one professor had his M.A. from the University of Notre Dame. Another had his S.S.L. from Pontifical Biblical Institute and his doctorate in Sacred Theology from Sant' Anselmo in Rome.

But if we look at the personalities involved here, it is evident that the full panoply of theology and more is present. Auxiliary professors (Oblates, Jesuits, Basilian Fathers, etc.) gave much different vistas and horizons of theological thought than that of Dominicans and the Fribourgeois theological menus.

There may be other "weaknesses", or areas where improvements could be made. The high praise and appreciation voiced by our respondents certainly outweigh any adverse criticism. The graduates of our Program found it so much easier to spell out their satisfaction with what they experienced.

In reading over the evaluations of some twenty-five and more of the students and professors, I find there is an optimism and a positive appreciation of the strengths of the program rather than the weaknesses.

Having outlined the various "strengths" and weaknesses" of the Graduate Theology Program, we now look at the Program from the point of view of the development of the theological aspect.

## THE STORY -- THEOLOGICAL ASPECT

### St. Mary's University Graduate Theology Program: 1960-1993

#### THEOLOGY DEVELOPING

##### A. IN THE COURSES

From the very beginning of the Program, when the theology presentations drew heavily on Thomistic theology (and philosophy) there have been changes. These changes have been substantial, and sometimes very subtle.

The first few years, some students felt that, in class, they were getting mostly warmed-over seminary notes. Some professors did admit that they used the notes taken and developed in their seminary days as the basis for the courses they taught.

Interestingly enough, the first few years, especially in the Scripture courses, there was an air of caution. The influence of the Biblical Commission was evident and perhaps negative. Levie's book, used in 1961 and a bit after, "The Word of God in the Words of Men" seemed very progressive and courageous. A reading of Fogarty's book on Biblical Scholarship in the United States these past decades will bring out why the air of caution was so strong.

In a few short years, "Dei Verbum" of the Council, preceded by the famous 1964 Declaration of the Biblical Commission on "The Historicity of the Gospels", opened the flood-gates of scholarship and research, especially in the New Testament.

This somewhat paralleled the openness felt by bible scholars in 1943 when "Divino Afflante Spiritu" gave exegetes so much freedom and opportunities to investigate and comment on literary genres in both Testaments, and present exegesis in a fresh way.

In fact, John O'Grady of Barry University, Florida, states in "Chicago Studies", April 1993 that "it was not until the "Declaration on the Gospels" in 1964 that Roman Catholic scholars could feel free to use the methods of contemporary scholarship in regard to the New Testament. O'Grady, a few lines further along, laments the fact that the official Church as well as some bishops ignore what is happening in scholarly circles these past few decades.

From 1970 on, theology scholars found inspiration and encouragement in the pages of the "Jerome Biblical Commentary", not only in the 1970 edition (actually

used as a text-book in some Scripture courses on campus) but more so in the 1990 edition, revised in much of its presentation.

This year, 1993, in the six volumes of "The Anchor Bible Dictionary" one can find ample indications of what was meant by the revealing lines of "Dei Verbum" and the 1964 Declaration.

### **B. IN THE STUDENTS**

Development was also apparent in the students. In the early 1960's, most students were young, eager, fresh and imaginative. As we entered the 1970's, older religious came in, veterans in the vineyards of the Lord, more cautious, but still very inventive. The division and the difference were not too noticeable at first, but showed up later. For a while, seminarians entered the Program, and completed some of their Theology formation in our Program. By 1990 a real variety was there, students who were older, very experienced, were lay and clerical, and most daring in their search for the meaning and means of ministry.

### **C. IN THE PROFESSORS**

Enrichment and development showed itself in the teaching and background of the professors. One saw the Neumanns, the Langlinais, the Millers and the Leiseses go off to the conventions, seminars, the workshops of the Mariological Society, the College Theology Society, the Society of Biblical Literature, the Canon Law Society of America, the Archaeological Institute of America.

Father George Montague was associate editor of the Catholic Biblical Quarterly 1969-1971; was Vice-President of the Catholic Biblical Association 1976-1977, and President 1977-1978.

One Scripture professor attended Bible Institutes in Vermont, Montana, Colorado, Oklahoma, Minnesota, listening to Barnabas Ahern, Addison Wright, Roland Murphy, John L. McKenzie, R.A.F. Mackenzie, Godfrey Dieckman, Carroll Stuhlmueller, Charles Curran, Joseph DeVault, Raymond E. Brown, Paul Achtemeier, Elizabeth Achtemeier, PHEME Perkins and others. The same professor, at Notre Dame, attended the lectures of Joseph Goldbrunner, Rene Laurentin, Bernard Haering, Roland Murphy. He was also the first of the Theology faculty to spend the summer in Israel, and to participate in the archaeological dig at Tel Gezer. All this had to do something to keeping alive the spirit of growth and investigation that should mark Theology on the Graduate level.

A student, graduating in the late 1960's would have found our professors different, challenging, at times puzzling, and at all times, echoing the changes in the Church which often are ignored for the years following the Council.



All in all, there was a healthy, Spirit-driven development and growth present.

#### **THE NEXT STEP**

Instead of a definite outline, year by year, of theological development, our "history" or "story" can go to the students and professors of the 33 years of our Program, and listen to their comments and conclusions. The "testimonies" came from the persons to whom we sent questionnaires and requests for comments. They speak for themselves.

# OBSERVATIONS -- COMMENTS - EVALUATIONS

from students and professors

1. "My recollections are that I enjoyed very much teaching at St. Mary's. The faculty and administration were quite cooperative. The students for the most part were highly motivated, serious and looking for solid theology.

I was teaching a full load at Oblate School of Theology, and my impression of the two programs is this: at Oblate the accent was more on pastoral ministry and the pastoral application of theology. Whereas, at St. Mary's, the accent seemed to be more on the academic side of theology. I.e. if you were studying theology in order to teach theology later, you'd tend to go to St. Mary's. If you were studying theology in order to be ordained and move out into parish work, you'd probably go to Oblate." (A professor, member of another religious congregation)

2. "I attended summer classes in 1962, 1963, and 1964. I profited much from all the courses given at the time, especially since Vatican Council II was in progress, and the courses helped me to update my theology in the light of that council.

I found the faculty of high caliber, most helpful and sympathetic to an older student (I was in my 40's at the time and ordained more than ten years."  
(A religious priest, student)

3. "Having been out of the seminary (Episcopal) only a relatively short time, comparing two programs was natural. The scholarship of the two institutions compared with equity in my memory. More important was the similarity of the logical positions. I was amazed at the similarity of our beliefs and concerns. The memories that stick with me most are those of the great camaraderie and the humor prevalent at the time, one that included me and a Greek Orthodox priest; both of us felt a part of things."

(Episcopal priest; member of "Servants in Ecumenical Dialogue" and close collaborator with the Catholic clergy.)

4. "The three summer sessions which I attended St. Mary's had profound influences on my life. I remember the summer of 1977 as one which rejuvenated and re-inspired me as a high school religion teacher.

The courses and the community spirit reaffirmed my original goals in choosing Theology as a B.A. degree. Also, as a lay person, I never felt excluded or left out from the majority of the other students who were in religious communities, although the financial aspect of attending was much greater for me as far as extra-curricular activities went; I had no "community expense account."

I became an adult Religious Ed director at a parish in Moore, Oklahoma. What pointed out to me what a fortunate experience St. Mary's was, was my subsequent attendance at a medical school from 1985 to 1989. I had expected the same or similar types of community atmosphere plus the respect for the individual and their growth, which St. Mary's had offered.

Well, medical school is a very different situation and it pointed out to me just how full the benefits of St. Mary's really were. At St. Mary's the faculty were friends, not adversaries."

(A student, just now completing all the requirements for a degree in Osteopathy in a northern state.)

5. "I have the responsibility for 103 elementary schools and 44 high schools, enrolling 56,000 students. We also offer support for Adult Faith formation. Thus I sought to upgrade my study of Theology.

The University Theology staff were very accommodating to me as a visitor from abroad. During the summer of 1990, I successfully completed four courses. I enjoyed the range of people and personalities. It was my first experience of studying side by side with Christians other than Roman Catholics. It was a new experience for me to have a priest as teacher for each course.

I am proud to be a distinguished graduate of St. Mary's. The Master's course reenkindled my love of Church and her teachings".

(a student from Down Under, very mature in his attitudes)

6. "My first summer at St. Mary's was as a student in the late 60's. It was a liberating, deepening and expanding experience for me.

I remember coming home to my community in\_\_\_\_ and telling the superior that if she thought that what we had was community spirit, she didn't know what community spirit was about... because we had experienced it at a completely different level.

I felt that most of the professors were interested in us and gave us real encouragement. They often participated in outside events, like a watermelon feast or a swimming party.

Some real bonding happened when we learned to theologize together... we spoke of deep realities, shared what we thought important to us. And yes, we played together. What wonderful memories I have of that time!!!

During the summer sessions I experienced some of the best liturgies of those years.

Library facilities? I found them adequate for most daily assignments, but began to go over to Oblate to use their resources when I had papers to do.

Professors? I believe that our professors were well-versed in their field; they met questions head-on, and shared their expertise with us, even though it might not have been the response the student wanted to hear. I was best prepared and most interested in the Scriptures.

Weaknesses? I thought there was a weakness in the area of Moral Theology.

Because we had such good professors who were well prepared, I remember how critical we were if the professor was not well-prepared, or simply read his notes to us. I remember one course on audio-visuals that we felt was insipid, and one course in sacramental theology where the professor simply told us we did not have to come to his class, but could write a paper if we preferred.

These were the only two courses that were a real disappointment."  
(a student, religious)

7. "I continue to recommend your graduate theology department to those who are interested in courses in theology. I am happy to recommend especially the theology department because of the presence of Father George Montague and Father John G. Leies."  
(a professor)

8. "I found the liturgies, especially, beautiful and meaningful. Another thing that impressed me was the wonderful community spirit between the Marianists and the students.

At the time of my studies, the stress was on theology itself, and I felt that there was not enough material in the comprehensives for those who were working in Religious Education. This was also the case with the topics for theses."  
(a student)

9. "I have particular memories of the summer of 1971 during which time I was taking a course on the Prophets from Father Miller.

That was the summer that a number of us put together a Talent Show with graduate theology students as participants. They were assisted by members of the Marianist Scholasticate community at the time.

I have a particular recollection of a production of "Hello Dolly" with Sister Petronia having doffed her habit for a flaming red dress and black feathers in her hair.

It was my responsibility to co-ordinate the liturgies as well as the various social events for the large group of students we had during those summers. I do recall a number of outings at Medina Lake, particularly the houseboat of the Engelbrecht family.

Brother John Totten's course on the "Theology of the Religious Experience" was particularly valuable."

(A Marianist, now in the ministry as a priest.)

10. "I felt that in the biblical area we were already in touch with the changes before Vatican II ended.

One of the by-products of my course on the Prophets was a two-album series of songs about the Prophets, produced with the help of our graduate theology students, especially Sister Carmelita Casso, IWBS: -- "Meet the Prophets", and "The Prophet's Dream" (Argus). These were nationally successful.

One of the by-products were the Spring and Fall Bible Institutes or Conferences Sunday afternoon, from one to five P.M., often drawing more than 300 people; one such Institute had 400 present."

(Father George Montague)

11. "I took courses in the evenings and in summer; I was absent from San Antonio for a while, then returned and finished. Several professors who taught me when I started were no longer at St. Mary's when I took my comprehensives. Only one of the three professors who conducted the comprehensive examinations had actually taught me.

I found that the professors who conducted my comprehensives very understanding of my having been a long-term theology student.

I enjoyed the community spirit especially in summer when the students generally were older and more experienced in ministry than those, mostly seminarians, who came during the school year.

The first course I took when I began Graduate Theology was on "St. Paul's Writings", given by Father George Montague. My late brother Neil was also in the program, finishing his Masters. I believe that we were the first brother and sister to be enrolled and sharing the same class."

(a religious Sister)

12. "When the traditional course in morality no longer seemed effective, Father Montague asked me if I would develop a morality course with a biblical background. We called it "discipleship". Eventually this grew into several courses

and became a specialization. Soon "discipleship" was re-named "spirituality."

Enrollment (in 1978 and shortly after) was low, so we tried to attract more students through a tuition reduced rate (as auditors), and then through big-name speakers such as David Stanley, Raymond Brown, Carroll Stuhlmueller, Ladislav Orsy, Joseph Champlin et al. These drew crowds.

At the same time, the number of spirituality courses continued to grow, adding especially a course in the history of spirituality that incorporated elements of the historico-critical method. In 1981 and 1982, I tried to form a renewal program for Sisters, but numbers were small.

During the summer that I was there, guest professors like Dick Smith, Don Neumann and Dianne Bergant seemed to be attractive and effective additions.

What I noticed in the summers was a gradual erosion of the original community spirit that was such a unique crowning card. Professors and students used to eat together, to celebrate the Eucharist and have Evensong together on a daily basis. While in some areas, academic quality was improving, interest and effort for this unique community spirit declined."

(a professor)

13. "I remember especially the good sense of humor of our teachers. I remember their personal help and assistance in our learning. I felt directed -- well-guided as I wrote my Master's thesis, and it had a lasting effect on my own spirituality.

(a religious sister)

14. "The courses were challenging and just what I needed as a beginning Religion teacher on the secondary level. What was equally important was that I felt that we were experiencing what we were discussing: a faith community worshipping and working together.

Community was an important factor that was directly addressed in many ways: starting with a structure of dorm life (most students lived on campus). There was the opening banquet and social (to become re-acquainted as persons), with both faculty and students.

I remember the traditional mid-semester all-day outing usually out of town, and the July 4th celebration.

Strongly connected/supporting community were the prayer opportunities the schedule afforded us: daily Evensong after the library closed, Sunday Eucharist, occasional and appropriate celebrations such as Sunday Vigil, Reconciliation,

special strengthening and then closing celebrations for those involved in comprehensives for the summer.

I also remember the mid-semester meeting of faculty and students to give feedback about the program; where it was and where it could go: a model of communication by people all seeking to do their best in spreading the Good News -- either as teachers offering, or as students receiving preparation to go out... Whenever I offered observations and suggestions verbally or in writing, the response I received indicated a careful listening and consideration.

The faculty arrangement was profitable. It was helpful to have a basic kernel of "regulars" who provided continuity. I also valued the practice of bringing in a teacher from another campus for the summer to address a special topic.

My one area of discomfort was that I did not sense a strong set of directives on what balance of courses to take.

Morality and moral issues did not seem to be directly addressed until the latter part of the 70's.

My memories of your program are the standards by which I have measured all my other summer-college experiences."  
(a religious Sister who has been very active in the administration of her religious community)

15. The Spirit of the Theology Program: "I appreciated the genuine acceptance and welcoming of the Marianist community to all of the students. It was "we" rather than "me" or "you". I believe that a real appreciation for prayer was demonstrated: all of us were encouraged to deepen our prayer life and to become involved in liturgy preparation.

I appreciated the joyful disposition of George Montague, Ade Windisch, John Leies and Willis Langlinais. John Leies Sr. was the best welcome wagon the program had.

My principal reason for enrolling at St. Mary's was the emphasis on Scripture..., St. Mary's was a center for Diaconate studies (one of five in the U.S. at the time, and our community (Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet) believed it to be one of the best at the time. Believe it or not, Notre Dame was not pushed for our studies because it did not have much to offer".

Course Presentation: "I liked the strong emphasis on Scripture. The Holy Land adventure (Theology 6607) meant a great deal to me. It has definitely helped my professional background and VTAE.

Outside Lecturers: At my time, we did not have any. This would have been wonderful.

State of Affairs: What a time of transition it was in the Church while I was present. Self-discovery was the topic of conversation. I was uncomfortable at the time because so many were "looking for partners", or were in discernment with their religious vocation.

I have appreciated the self-confidence that was communicated to the students. The multi-cultural dimension was a great plus for the students.

The undergraduate degree program seems to get attention. I have been impressed with the Physical Plant, the campus as a whole; I have been back twice and it is impressive to see the physical growth. The campus is beautiful."

Present Work: "I am assisting with the Practicum and the Masters in Pastoral Ministry at Aquinas Institute of Theology. This Master's Program has an emphasis in R.C.I.A."  
(a religious Sister, very active while studying here, and a very good coordinator of the liturgies.)

16. "Accepting the post of advisor of the Graduate Theology Program, I felt that this asked me to do more than be an internal administrative person, but that there should be active responsibility to go beyond, since the theology work was one of our most important ministries.

I remember spending a lot of time and energy on revising the curriculum. I felt that this framework was a bit too "classical" or Thomistic and I wanted to insert some courses that were the focus of more theological interest, such as historical theology, spirituality, world religions and the theology of ministry.

I remember a particularly enthusiastic response to offerings in spirituality, e.g. the "Theology of Prayer", and "Saints and Mystics". Even the traditional courses were sometimes re-titled and put into a new framework to reflect a new thrust.

Lectures and workshops were organized occasionally. I remember a workshop on the theology of religious life in the summer of 1972 or 1973, with Raymond Hostie from Belgium, John Sheets (now bishop) and others. Lucien Deiss gave a fine workshop one week-end, and Rene Laurentin came a couple of times, invited, I believe, by Father Neumann.

We tried to organize liturgies, rather classic in style, possibly a bit pompous at times, but with a bit of folksy touch as well.



I thought that we had a strong faculty during this period, through a mixture of the regular St. Mary's professors and Marianists and others invited in for the summers.

But there was not a high level of team-work or group sharing on the faculty level, and some ideological differences seethed beneath the surface at times".  
(a professor who taught for five years in our Program)

17. "I found the course presentations very good, challenging and creative. The academic degree earned at St. Mary's is superior to a degree offered by any other university. A graduate from St. Mary's has a broader background than someone from another institution; a two-credit course at St. Mary's required the same amount if not more work than a three-credit course somewhere else.

The comprehensive exams were excellent. I found that in the written and oral exams, I was really treated with dignity, fairness, respect and compassion.

The liturgies were excellent, the homilies presented by various professors were very inspiring and on target with the scriptures of the day. The music was excellent.

The community spirit which was generated and nourished was a tremendous plus for the summer program.

Overall, it is the professors and the support staff which make the Graduate Theology Program a resounding success. I am very happy with my experience at St. Mary's. It was truly a remarkable experience!!"  
(a religious Brother, still active in parish work)

18. "The sound theological and catechetical knowledge fostered at St. Mary's, the learning skills acquired and the basic understanding of education as adult-modeled and life-long have been valuable."

(Sr. Christina Anne, C.S.S.F., Newsletter 2:2 May '83)

Let us close this collection of appraisals and critiques from students and professors with this evaluation of a religious Sister, active in teaching and whom I found to be assertive and critical in a positive way, as a student and since then.

"Since St. Mary's program was an intellectual approach rather than a pastoral one, I was disappointed that Hebrew and Greek was not a requirement for those in Biblical Studies area. Many other colleges require undergraduates to have at least a year of either language -- I believe that Texas Christian is one of them. Because I felt so strongly about this, I took Hebrew by correspondence when it was offered during the 1981 fall term. For some reason, I was not able to get

morality courses, which I later on had to teach in high school. I realize that Moral Theology was not in vogue then.

I would have liked to have more elbow room with the three major papers I was required to write. That is, be permitted to be a little more creative. Two of the three papers I wrote, I wrote because I had to, so I have not been able to use any of the research for personal spirituality or teaching. When so much effort is put into something, it's too bad that nothing came of it. Being creative does not water down discipline or theology. True creativity uses both.

I hope that communication between departments has improved.

The same week I was invited to be a graduate assistant, I received a big computer printout from the Brother who did the counseling on campus. His big concern was why I had decided to leave St. Mary's! The printout was about why I had decided to leave. Boy, was I shocked!"

Let's leave this part of the history on this note of uncertainty, knowing that the program will evolve and develop interestingly and surprisingly.

## EVALUATION FROM ALUMNI/AE AND PROFESSORS

May 1, 1993

Dear Alumnus, Alumna, Student, Professor, Friend:--

Father Charles Miller, S.M., Dean, has asked me to write the history of the Graduate Theology Department of St. Mary's, 1960-1993.

In addition to class-lists, course listings, names of professors, dissertations, scholarly essay, comprehensive examinations, explanations of the development of certain courses after Vatican II, etc., I would like to incorporate input from our graduates and others. Some twenty inquiries have already gone out.

I would appreciate any observations or remarks or criticisms about our Graduate Theology programs - that includes course presentation, comprehensive exams, liturgies, community spirit, tuition costs, term papers, outside lecturers, etc., etc.

On the enclosed sheet, would you put down your personal observations and any remarks that you would like to submit.

There is a stamped self-addressed envelope enclosed for your convenience.

An early reply is doubly appreciated.

Yours,

Rev. John G. Leies, S.M.

Rev. John G. Leies, S.M.  
Marianist Faculty Residence  
520 Fordham Avenue  
San Antonio, Texas 78228  
tel. 210-436-3140

(Letter from author of this history sent to alumni/alumnae of the Graduate Theology Program)

**LETTER SENT IN SPRING 1993 TO PROFESSORS WHO HAD TAUGHT  
OR WERE TEACHING IN THE GRADUATE THEOLOGY PROGRAM**

"Father Charles Miller, S.M., Dean, has asked me to write a history of the Graduate Theology Program here at St. Mary's, 1960-1993.

I will need your input and your information to ensure that we cover all aspects and include all valuable data.

Would you please answer these questions or data-areas: (space was left for the answers)

Would you please give the years when you taught Graduate Theology courses, and which courses: for summers  
for fall or winters semesters

Which subjects were your favorites?

What was the size of your class?

Are there any persons who stand out in your memory (professors or students)?

What gradual evolution took place in your courses? (e.g. in biblical studies, the change was great, especially after 1964)

Do you feel that certain areas were neglected?

What were the reasons why the number of graduate theology students dropped from the all-time high of 150 to the present smaller numbers?

Any regrets that you have as regards our Graduate Theology Program?

Would you please write out any questions which you feel I should have asked.

## EVALUATION OF THE GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL PROGRAM

Summer 1990

Students:    male: 7        female: 8        7 lay    3 ordained    6 religious

evaluation of the program:

excellent: 11  
very good: 3  
good: 1  
satisfactory: 0  
poor: 0

of the Bookstore:

excellent: 10  
very good: 3  
good: 2  
satisfactory: 0  
poor: 0

Desires:

more options of courses

a need for the pastoral setting

administration of the department:

excellent: 14  
very good: 1  
good: 0  
satisfactory: 0  
poor: 0

Ana and Geri were most helpful

Desired topics:

St. Paul, specialization

Bio-ethics

Theology of Administration

Gospel of Matthew

Feminine Theology

Old Testament Theology